



STATE OF MICHIGAN

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Sen. Van Woerkom and Rep. Farhat voice Friend of the Court concerns to governor

Lansing – State Sen. Gerald Van Woerkom and Rep. David Farhat sent a letter to the governor yesterday detailing their concerns regarding the new Friend of the Court system in Muskegon County.

“Ever since they installed the new enforcement system my office has experienced an increase in calls from Muskegon residents,” said Van Woerkom, R-Norton Shores. “People in Muskegon are having problems getting their child support payments in a timely manner and that is inexcusable.”

Recently, Michigan’s statewide child support system received federal certification for the Michigan Child Support Enforcement System. Even with this new system in place, Muskegon residents using FOC services in Muskegon have not seen problems corrected and receive poor customer service when they contact the new service line.

“We understand it will take some time to fix the problems with the new system – but they need to be fixed,” said Farhat, R-Muskegon. “Too many people rely on child support checks from the FOC and, unfortunately, this new system is not meeting their needs.”

The increase in complaints to both Van Woerkom’s and Farhat’s offices since implementation of the new system led to a meeting between their offices and the local FOC administrator. At that time, the primary concern was the \$40 million being held in suspense accounts instead of being paid out to custodial parents.

In the letter sent to the governor, Van Woerkom and Farhat expressed their questions and concerns regarding the new system, including:

- What steps are being taken to minimize the amount of money held in suspense accounts and expedite payments to custodial parents on time;

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- Whether or not the money held in suspense accounts is earning interest and if so, how is it being used; and
- Whether or not there is a state plan in place to provide better customer service to State Disbursement Unit and FOC clients.

“Representative Farhat and I both look forward to working with the governor to solve these problems and help restore people’s confidence in the FOC,” Van Woerkom said.

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